

25- 25-  
THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF MANUFACTURING TOWNS.

---

A

# DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION

OF THE

FRANKLIN STREET CHURCH,

IN

MANCHESTER, N. H.

DEC. 22, 1847.

BY

HENRY M. DEXTER,  
PASTOR.

---

Published by request.

---

ANDOVER:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM H. WARDWELL.

1848.

THE following Discourse, prepared for the occasion of the dedication of the Franklin Street Church in this city, and by request, since delivered (with alterations) in the John Street Church in Lowell, is now yielded for publication at the desire of those whose opinion I am accustomed greatly to respect, in the hope that it may tend to awaken public interest in a subject perhaps too long undervalued. I have slightly modified some passages for the sake of greater clearness, and inserted others, including one entire subdivision, which were omitted for want of time in the delivery.

H. M. D.

*Manchester, N. H. Jan. 22, 1848.*

## DISCOURSE.

---

2 KINGS 2: 21.

AND HE WENT FORTH UNTO THE SPRING OF THE WATERS, AND CAST THE SALT IN THERE, AND SAID, THUS SAITH THE LORD, I HAVE HEALED THESE WATERS; THERE SHALL NOT BE FROM THENCE ANY MORE DEATH OR BARREN LAND.

THE history of the world discloses different eras of civilization. In the slow progress of centuries, new forms of government, new social facts, new moral tendencies have been developed; each bringing with it the necessity of a new adjustment of many things. Europe, for example, in her recorded pilgrimage through the different influences of the feudal system, the church, the rise of free cities, and the crusades, down to the time of her centralization in her present form of national existences, required that her social, moral and religious appliances should be carefully modified in many things, to coincide with each existing phase of progress. In a lesser degree, the same is true everywhere, and always. Our social condition differs, in many important respects, from that of our Puritan fathers. In order then to exert her due influence, the church must now adapt herself to those changes, becoming all things to all men, in respect of times and seasons, as well as of persons and prejudices, that by all means, for the gospel's sake, she may save some.

It becomes then one of the most important, as it is one of the most difficult duties of the enlightened Christian, to watch the shadows of coming events, to note in season those new forms of social exist-



ence or of moral influence, which are approaching, and to adapt thereto the apparatus of salvation, that we be not unawares left behind the advancing position of our appropriate labors.

He who, in sympathy with these principles, will look with an observant eye upon New England, cannot fail, I think, to perceive the presence and progress of a somewhat fundamental change in our social existence; a change which, if it shall go on, as for the last twenty-five years it has advanced, will not be long in acquiring the power to alter materially the whole moral aspect of this portion of our land. The sudden uprising, and the unprecedented growth of *manufacturing towns*, is a new element in the civilization of this century. It is one too, which by its inherent attraction as a fruitful fact, and much more by its probable relations to morality and piety among us, deserves—perhaps I might say, demands—a thorough investigation.

The youngest, most inexperienced sailor, when the tiller of a deeply laden, richly freighted ship is in his hands, and the responsibility fairly upon him, will cast forward into the dense sea atmosphere his keenest glance, and with quick, sensitive ear will painfully listen for the faintest roar of the distant breakers. And sometimes the very solemnity of his position, will give to his suggestions an import entirely foreign to the appropriate result of his years, or his wisdom.

Presuming upon a position not entirely dissimilar, and in the hope of humbly suggesting some facts and inferences which may neither be in themselves altogether valueless, nor in their relations entirely inappropriate to this interesting hour; I ask you to go with me into such an investigation of this subject, as time may permit.

I. *Let us inquire, as to the outward fact of change?* And here it is not my design to speak prominently of tariffs or of markets, of national government or national wealth. Thirty years ago, manufactures were little known except in the family, where the spinning

wheel and the hand-loom made daily industrial music. So little, indeed, were manufactures as compared with commerce, then considered to be *the* source of New England's wealth, that in 1816, two thirds of our delegation in Congress voted for the reduction of the tariff; and even so lately as 1828, our northern votes were sixteen for, to twenty-three against the protective bill. Our population was then quietly increasing at the rate of from fifteen to twenty per cent. in the ten years interval between one census and the next; and this increase was very evenly diffused. The old farming towns retained their children, to swell their numbers. With the exception of the ordinary pleasurable and pecuniary attractions of the commercial city, there was little to allure the young from the immediate neighborhood of the parental hearthstone. Character was developed under home influences, and valued, because without it there could be no hope of success in life, no possibility of escaping unnoticed among the crowd. Under the ordinary operation of the phase of social existence which was then predominant, the probability was that—saving here and there, one attracted to the metropolis by the hope of gain, and another led by love of adventure into the then unknown and mysterious wilderness of the West—the great mass of the men, and nearly all the women, would live within easy distance of their father's home, and be buried at last by their father's grave.

Turn now to New England as she is, and mark well the difference. Her population has increased with not much more than the old per centage in the sum total, but there has been a tendency to aggregation. The hills have been drained, and the valleys filled. We have an immense increase of cities and large towns, while those cities gather population with a rapidity unlike anything old. Jonah's gourd scarcely grew faster than they, in proportion to its size. We have now, for example, about forty towns and cities containing over five thousand inhabitants each; and more than one hundred and ten towns, containing over three



thousand, each. And yet while this is true, it is also true that the ratio of increase in the whole of New England does not exceed, by more than one or two per cent., what it was from 1800 to 1810. That is to say, this increase of large towns is not an actual gain of population, but as the large towns increase, the small towns grow smaller. It is the result merely of a change of place, in the people. The inland, agricultural towns have thinned out. Their loose population has floated down to form our villages, as their rivulets have done to make our rivers. This, the actual reckoning of figures, as well as our common observation, makes certain; and it is the most striking fact, at first view, of the present aspect of our social condition.

But on a careful examination we shall find yet another fact most important in its bearings upon our subject, and that is, this tide of population ever flowing to these centralizing points, does not remain stationary there. It returns again. It is more like the circulation of the blood through artery and vein—from the heart, to the heart once more—than it is like the river gliding toward the ocean, though that comes back again in mist and rain.

It has been found by the most accurate computation\* in our great sister manufacturing city—and I can find no reason to doubt that the same proportions will hold good here and elsewhere—that not far from one fifteenth of the whole population flow in and out each year. The average period of time during which the female operatives remain, is but *four and a half years*, so that of the whole seven thousand and more, there employed, more than *fifteen hundred and fifty* come and go each year. If the three thousand male operatives stay twice as long, nearly *three hundred and fifty* of their number must thus yearly arrive and depart; proving that in that city of 30,000 souls, not many less than 2000 annually come under its influences; while as many who have been, during a period

---

\* See "Lowell as it was, and as it is," by Rev. H. A. Miles.

of from four to nine years there educated, depart. Many go, I am aware, to other establishments of the same kind elsewhere; yet many more, we have reason to believe, return to their distant home, there to resume their permanent citizenship.

Call now to mind the immense number of manufacturing cities and villages, which have clustered about our waterfalls, and remember this element of their nature, and you will be surprised at the constant flux of population. You will begin almost to fall in with that famous dogma of the old Eleatic philosophers, "that everything flows, and that nothing stands."

It was estimated a few years since, by one of our most distinguished statistical writers,\*—within the last few weeks deceased,—that the city of Lowell might then be considered as representing about *one ninth* of the cotton manufactures of the United States. The home consumption of cotton for the last year was 428,000 bales,† of which between one sixth and one seventh were consumed there. Taking into account, then, the recent very large increase of cotton manufactures, and the fact also that there were last year in the United States 1039 woollen mills,‡ together with many other kindred branches of manufacture, beyond the reach of statistics, and yet entirely resemblant in the principle of social results—it would probably be now a very moderate calculation, to estimate that city as representing *one tenth* of the whole manufacturing element. We have seen that it may, not inaptly, be termed one great boarding-school, where the pupils remain from four to nine years, and which *graduates* (including beside actual operatives, the multitudes of others who come and go) not far from *two thousand a year*. If then she represents one tenth of the whole system, we shall have an aggregate of near *one hundred thousand operatives*, and an annual "graduation" of near *twenty thousand*. That is to say, the current is

---

\* Timothy Pitkin.      † See Hunt's Merchant's Mag. for Dec. 1847.

‡ "Statistics of the Woollen Manufactures of the U. S.," by William H. Graham.



setting into, and out of, our manufacturing cities and towns, at the yearly rate of *twenty thousand* each way.

Add now to this, another fact. As long as the rivers journey toward the sea,—such is the energy and determination of the New England character,—so long will these manufactories continue to exist. Every advance of liberty among the nations, every crumbling throne in the East, every onward step of civilization among the islands, reacts upon them, tending to increase the demand and the sale, and of course the production and profits, of the fabrics they weave. Tariff or no tariff, God made our northern streams to *work their passage* to the ocean, and whether the sky of politics is clear or clouded, New England will always find her gold mines in her mountain torrents. It is not strange then that we hear continually of the beginning of new towns with this design. Four or five of the largest class—other Lowells—are already planned or in progress; and, in due time, when they shall be fairly in extensive operation, how immense will be the additional current thus called into being! Things remaining as they are, ten years will give us a multitude of *two hundred thousand*, who in a literal sense will have gone “through the mill;” and with the lowest calculation of estimated increase, twenty years will distribute through the land near FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND, or, during the probable lifetime of many now present, more, almost twice over, than the entire population of the State of New Hampshire! These estimates, I am conscious, may seem surprisingly large; but if I mistake not, they are founded upon data of unquestionable truth. We have, possibly, too long overlooked this aspect of the case.

II. *Such being the amount of the annual impress of our manufactures upon the social character, it becomes an important subject of inquiry, what the nature of that impress will be?* And here, though it is a matter of great consequence, not only in its direct bearing upon the physical condition, but also in its indirect influence upon the mind and heart, time obliges me to pass by without



a word the effect of our great manufacturing establishments upon the bodily health, and the probable long life of those who labor in them. I proceed, of necessity, to designate,

1. *The intellectual influences which may be considered as somewhat peculiar to our manufacturing cities.*

One peculiarity is found in the fact, that the mind is here more excited, and acts more rapidly than elsewhere. The most casual observer must have noticed that, in mental activity, a community like ours is remarkably distinguished from all others. In the quiet towns whence our population is gathered, the people are scattered widely asunder. The houses greet each other from long intervals. Each man, living in the centre of his own homestead, is removed by the very extent of his possessions from the dwelling of his neighbor. Being busied more or less all day and every week in the solitary culture of his farm, he meets his townsmen and argues with them only at comparatively long intervals. The Sabbath assembly and the periodical town-meeting, are almost the only occasions when he interchanges sentiments with them. There is consequently little excitability among them. It takes several days for an item of news to reach every cottage over the wide territory of the parish.

On the other hand, in the commercial city where tens of thousands are condensed within a few square rods of brick and mortar, there is a more quick sympathy with excitement of every kind. The ringing of a bell at an unaccustomed hour, which in the country would only arouse and alarm the four or five families who chance to live within sight and sound of the church steeple, will in the city sometimes bring multitudes from their beds at the dead of night. So, too, a death by violence, an appalling accident, or an exciting political occurrence, by means of news-rooms and bulletins, is in a few hours conveyed sometimes to four hundred thousand people, who may be all at once intensely agitated by it.

But in a community like ours, there is more excitability, more mental activity, than in the great commercial emporium, or the quiet hamlet. More than in the latter, from our compact, crowded state; more than in the former, because there each man is often a stranger to his next door neighbor; because the population is not daily brought together in great masses; because its inhabitants are not chiefly, as with us, *young men* and *young women*; and because, also, the nature of their employment does not so much as here favor thought and discussion. In the words of one who has had a large experience of the influences of our system of life, "thrown perpetually together, and engaged in kindred employments, persons here share each other's thoughts and sympathies with more than mesmeric quickness and power. Usage and prescription, so authoritative on all subjects in some places, and on some subjects in all places, are here almost cast aside. A new and bold thought is scarcely conceived, before it is thrown out to fire some other mind; and long before in other places it would have acquired currency as a subject of remark, it is here embodied in bold and decisive action." In such an assemblage of those, who, by their time of life, as well as by the circumstances of their position are peculiarly excitable, it is impossible for men to remain mentally indolent. While at work, with the intellect free to think,—during their brief intervals of leisure and at evening, some person, some place, some subject is, and by the laws of the mind must be, the object of their busy contemplation. They think and debate, doubtless, many times as much as they would have done among the quieter scenes of their early home.

*Another intellectual peculiarity of our society, growing out of that already mentioned, is a tendency to acquire an increase of knowledge.* A residence among us has a tendency to store the mind with more of certain kinds of information than our population would probably have acquired had they remained at home. Knowledge is the food of the mind. The more active that



mind becomes, the more keen is its appetite. I am well aware that the information here imparted is not always of the most refined character. Still the fact remains, and on this account becomes even the more worthy of our notice.

“ A little knowledge is a dangerous thing,  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.”

“ It is true,” says Lord Bacon in one of his Essays, “ that a little philosophy inclineth man’s mind to Atheism, but depth of philosophy bringeth man’s mind about to religion ; for while the mind of man looketh upon the second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them and go no further ; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity.” In every community like ours there is, and perhaps must be, a great deal of this unhappy half-knowledge ; unhappy, not because its possessor knows so much, but because he does not know more. With a restless desire for some kind of mental food, and little time or convenience for deep study, it may be that superficial knowledge must be deemed a necessary evil ; but it is nevertheless an evil whose frequent consequences no arithmetic can calculate.

For example, here is a young man who wishes to spend a few leisure hours in reading. Let him, as he will be very likely to do, come under the inauspicious teachings of some of those *priests of the devil in yellow surplices*, which, in the shape of “ novelettes,” prize tales, and sixpenny editions of impurity and infidelity, lie in wait in our subterranean beer-shops, and in too many of our bookstores ; and he will learn *something*, it is true. He will know more than he did before, but his knowledge is bad, and will harm his soul. His inquiring mind will be flooded with all manner of shallow objections to Christianity, the puny, a thousand times exploded sophistries of Paine and his notorious disciples. If he gets a little more knowledge, if he comes to read afterward Leslie or Nelson, or even has the

good sense to read the Bible carefully, in all probability he will be safe ; otherwise, what he does know will kill him, because he does not know a little more.

To answer the demand created by the intellectual activity of our population, we have all kinds of food. On the Sabbath, sermons for those who will hear ; and in the week, libraries, reading rooms, lectures, concerts, ball-room assemblies, buffooneries, piles of saffron-colored literature, exceedingly lean and diminutive major generals,\* the peculiarly "*moral† entertainment*" of renegade Shakers whirling like so many tops, and a museum saloon ! With more or less of these, sometimes in very ill-assorted combinations, our population will become familiar. These are the viands which are spread upon the table whence their mind's hunger must be appeased. They will by and by go home, either nurtured to a more manly strength by solid nutriment, made thereby fit to be as pillars in the social and civil structure ; or debilitated and diseased and depraved by a pernicious and poisonous diet, to spend their years in sickly sentimentalism, in weeping over the distresses of the fictitious fool of the last new novel, or still worse, in gloating over the wily suggestions and deadly innuendos of a covert and yet fatal infidelity.

2. *But I must pass to the more important inquiry, kindred indeed to that just now discussed, what are the moral influences of our manufacturing cities ?* Wherein do our population differ from their probable moral condition had they stayed at home ?

---

\* It is unknown to me in what branch of military service men are promoted for their *bodily* littleness ; but I have thought it must be a fact exceedingly grateful to some high dignitaries, now or lately in Mexico, that all manikins less than two feet in height, under forty pounds in weight, and in every way (did they not tax our pity) considerably beneath contempt, who retail their insignificance through the land at twenty-five cents a sight, invariably (whether with an eye to the presidency or not I cannot say) assume to be brother "Major Generals."

† If one may judge from the placards of kindred exhibitions, taken in connection with the newspaper reports of the manner of their performance, it would seem fair to infer that the present standard of theatrical ethics may be stated somewhat thus : *the more naked, the more "moral"*—possibly on the ground that even "fig-leaves" were a sub-lapsarian invention.



One difference, and that which might possibly first strike the eye of a stranger is, that they are made more profuse in the expenditure of money, especially for apparel. It might be wonderful if this were not so. They are in the regular receipt of money. This is the great argument of their coming. It may be that their parents have been kept by the hand of Providence in a position of the humblest means, and the children wish to relieve them of a portion of their toil. It may be that misfortune has jeopardized the legal possession of the spot dear to them as their birth-place, and they would redeem it from the hand of the stranger. It may be that they are dependent orphans, and wish to bear their own burdens. In either case they hasten hither, because they may not only procure employment, but receive therefor a sum greater than the same toil would elsewhere bring. Money, often to them in unaccustomed sums, is thus regularly in their possession. Here then they have the means of gratification. Now I shall not libel one of the sexes when I say, that a taste for outward adorning is, somehow, natural to them. Supply creates demand, and a young girl with money monthly in her purse can hardly walk by our brilliantly illuminated show windows, where all the ten thousand nameless necessities and elegancies of the female toilet are so enticingly displayed, and be expected long to resist the temptation to gratify her love of dress. The indulgence of this taste leads also to profuseness in other expenditures. There seems to be indeed something, either in the mode of factory life or the example of the multitude, which begets in many instances a morbid desire for artificial stimulants of the appetite. Thus the purse is sometimes emptied, and the health injured, by a foolish and expensive patronage of the seller of sweetmeats. I wish it were certain that the *morals* are not injured also; but Satan tempted Eve with an apple, and it is much to be feared that his hook, in our time, is often baited at the confectioners.

*A second peculiarity of moral influence, is the greater pres-*

*ence of various kinds of amusements.* In our quiet inland towns assemblies for amusement are necessarily somewhat infrequent, and when existing they have more of the family element than here. "Parties," technically so called, there gather the old with the young. Around the same festive board, you may number the silver locks of the aged patriarch waiting the summons to his rest, the manly front of the father, and the chestnut curls of the uneasy pet, his son. Nothing there can enter which does not affect the whole circle. It is happily only at long intervals that they are visited by those wandering caravans which, with baboon and ape blushing for the human company they are obliged to keep, scatter their infamous impurities, sugared over for the public palate with the thin covering of a laugh. The juggler and the actor are to a great degree discountenanced by the plain good sense of these scattered villages. "God made the country, but man made the town ;" and such strollers usually find man's work most congenial to their designs. While therefore there is in our farming towns much wholesome and rational enjoyment, there is comparatively little of the more exciting and pernicious amusements.

Far different is it in our manufacturing cities. Here is the very hot-bed of this species of temptation. The absence of the restraints and privileges of the home fireside, so delightful and salutary in their effects, predisposes our population to seek evening entertainment abroad ; while, to take advantage of this fact, all classes of adventurers, from the fortune-teller up through the dram-seller and the player and the dancing-master, to the travelling monkey of the menagerie, pollute us with their presence.

The result of all this it needs no prophet to declare. The comic song, the low revel, and those wretched libels on the drama the "vaudevilles," now popular, filled with double meanings and licentious movements ; the public dancer, with drapery that would be scant in the climate of an oven ; all have a tendency to debase and destroy the moral sensibilities, to arouse



the vilest passions, to weaken the distinctions between vice and virtue, and to prepare the character to yield under the first onset of fierce temptation. If the heart, or even the intellect were right, there could be no temptation in them, but all men would say with the poet,

“ For now such things are acted there, as make  
The devils blush ; and from the neighborhood  
Angels and holy men trembling retire.”

*A third peculiarity is kindred to the last, that our citizens are more exposed to the influences of bad company, than they would have been at home.* There is no truer passage of Scripture, reiterated by every day's experience, than that which intimates that bad men shun the light. They cannot live in comfort and prosperity except in the obscurity of a crowd. In our country towns every man's character is known to his neighbors, and every new comer is observed. If he is a bad man, he cannot long hide it, nor can he long brave a virtuous public sentiment by continuing in the commission of known crimes. All eyes are upon him, all voices condemn him. Hence the suspicious and the vile, the gambler and the libertine seek refuge in our cities ; and because, of all cities, those filled with the youthfully credulous and inflammable population drawn together by manufactures, are most congenial to their designs, they especially lie in wait “in the lurking-places” of our villages. Dressed in the garb of gentlemen, with an impertinent assurance which is mistaken by themselves and their victims for ease of manners, and a voluble profaneness which passes for refinement, with a polish borrowed from the tailor's goose and the bootmaker's last, they swagger through our streets, they elbow modest men from our sidewalks, and true to the suggestive example

“ Of that sweet Lord, whose gentlest hint is law”

with them, they are continually walking about “seeking whom they may devour.” Educated in the politest

iniquities, thorough masters of the black arts of seduction, like him whom Ithuriel found,

“Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,  
Assaying by his fiendish art to reach  
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge  
Illusions as he list—phantasms and dreams ;”

so they whisper daily their alluring accents in the ear of unsuspecting innocence. That they do so, often not in vain, is a sad inference which facts must justify.

*A fourth moral difference is found in the greater prevalence of temptations to religious error.* Though there is error enough everywhere, there are some spots peculiarly cursed with it. It seems true, however, that in our country towns there is usually a sort of family influence which contributes to keep the young in the same religious fold with their fathers. And as the number of religious sects is few, the influences which tend to seduce them from that path of opinion to which years and the deliberate opinion of friends have given sanction, are comparatively rare.

The Bible is yet revered in the land. By the happy ignorance of the dwellers on the hill-sides, they are yet the subjects of that (in some places and some *pulpits*) antiquated notion that its words are true, and its teachings not merely valuable, but even *essential* on spiritual subjects. The march of mind has not yet introduced them to that modern idea, that its only use is to be ingeniously annulled ; that the true process of theology is, to form a creed to please yourself,—the more absurd the better, as giving greater scope for ingenuity in the application of proof-texts,—and then to select such portions of the Scriptures as may be twisted into its seeming support, and explain away the remainder, or if it prove too stubborn for such treatment, coolly to deny that it has any inspired authority. The fabricators of patent schemes of eternal life, whom Hawthorne has so keenly satirized as building a *rail-road* to that celestial city, whither only John Bunyan’s weary path used to lead, are crafty enough to suit



their articles of faith to the demands of the natural heart. Plenty of sin here, and plenty of salvation hereafter, is a recipe exceedingly agreeable to those who have a keen relish for sensual pleasure, and yet whose slumberous conscience when occasionally quickened by the memories of an early and strict moral training, is not, on the old theory, at once put to rest. Falling in lovingly as it does with every man's business however infamous, and with his pleasures however vile ; gathering with equal suavity to its embrace, the saint and the scoundrel ; breathing its petitions with the same fervor and efficiency, in the oath and the prayer ; with the same certainty encircling with the halo of its hope, the placid features of the departed Christian, and the putrescent carcass of the drunken debauchee ; it is not strange that, where full scope is given, it should appeal with success to the thoughtless multitudes.

In the manufacturing city, we have nearly all kinds of Sabbath worship, with some peculiar facilities on the part of each sect for success. The errorist here finds the children away from the reproof and advice of the pious parent, and finds them too, drawn by a thousand influences towards anything lax in morals and religion. Hence many who, at home, would have remained under those influences which would probably have resulted in their conversion and Christian life, here make shipwreck of the faith.

*Add to these another peculiarity, that the population is, to a remarkable degree, youthful, and removed from the restraints of home.* Certainly more than half the population of our manufacturing towns is to such an extent youthful, that their character is not yet firmly established. Their time of life is that time when the blood beats impetuously through the arteries, and the passions are most impatient of restraint ; when life seems like a long sunny summer's day, imparting the happy glow of its own light to the distant objects it reveals ; when every temptation to sin is increased by the thought, " if I yield, the passionate ardor of youth

will be my excuse, and in the day of gray hairs I will repent at my leisure." Again, they are for the most part congregated in crowded boarding-houses, with which, though managed in the best possible manner, it is still hard to associate those elevating and restraining sentiments which cluster about the sacred name of *home*. They are, to some extent, lost in the crowd. The sober, admonishing voice of the father, and the mild, persuading eye of the mother, are not here, to rebuke and recall from the beginnings of evil. As a natural consequence, also, less responsibility for the character is felt. An act of imprudence, of which under the eye of relatives and friends they would be bitterly ashamed, it is sometimes deemed safe here to commit. Some have thought that, as they were not to spend their lives here, their character while they remain would have little to do with their life; that they could leave behind them their city reputation, and reassume on their return that which they were wont to have at home. Thus one of the strongest preventives of evil, the assurance of feeling the immediate consequences of the conduct in the good or ill opinion of others, loses much of its influence.

It is an acknowledged fact, that stability of character, and strong moral principle, are not natural to the young. If they will acquire them anywhere, unaided, they are not likely to do so here. Let a youth become a resident among us, with no bad habits, but with few good ones; pleasant and amiable, and yet giddy and thoughtless; unspotted as yet from the world, and still with all the glowing enthusiasm of a young heart for a participation in that world's pleasures; away from the eye and tongue of those who love him and pray for him, who sent him from his home with many tears that he did not see; and let him be exposed in all his childlike inexperience to the arts of the evil, and it is a question, which a wretched experience has often painfully answered, whether his body and his soul are not in danger.

*Still further, an important difference of moral condition*



*is found in the method of keeping the Sabbath.* Thanks, under God, to those old Christian heroes who, two hundred and twenty-seven years ago this day, planted the seeds of New England upon the rock of Plymouth, (a stony soil, I know, yet one that hath borne glorious fruit,) there yet remaineth to our land the keeping of Sabbaths. Grossly as the holy hours are abused by many, it is still a part of our creed, as a people, to hallow them. Our hills, here and there, are crowned with church spires, those silent fingers pointing ever upward toward the pure abode of Him, for whose glory they were builded, to whose service they are consecrate. It is still the *habit* of the people to reverence the Lord's day.

But it is a painful fact, that the influences of a manufacturing city are, on the whole, adverse to the Sabbath. It is often deemed necessary, by those who should best know and who alone can decide, that labor should be performed in some portions of their establishment on that day. Now it cannot be denied, that this fact does exercise a malign influence upon the minds of those in their employ. True or false, their logic is this: "It is deemed necessary that some work be done on the Sabbath, and therefore necessary that some of us should stay away from the sanctuary to do it. But if it is right to neglect the public service of God for business, why not much more for recreation and health? If it is right to break the command of the Almighty to please our employers, why not much more to please ourselves?"

There is also another aspect of this subject. There were last year in the city of Lowell,\* thirty thousand inhabitants and twenty-three churches. If these churches would comfortably seat, on an average, seven hundred persons each, only about sixteen thousand could by any possibility hear the gospel, leaving a proportion of almost *one half* entirely and of necessity excluded from the means of grace. In this city, there

---

\* See "Lowell as it was, and as it is."



are at the present time about thirteen thousand inhabitants, and ten places of worship, seating on an average not more than six hundred and fifty each,\* leaving here, also, about *one half* the population of necessity excluded. It is believed to be entirely within the truth, to say that in no manufacturing village can many more than one half the people be brought under the appropriate influences of the Sabbath. So long then as the present state of things remains, great multitudes *must* be habitually absent from the salutary atmosphere of the house of God. They are young and heedless, and many things conspire to dull their sensibility to God's law. Confined during most of the daylight of the week, and on the Sabbath exposed to the attractive example of those who do not scruple to take their own pleasure in the fields, under the bright sun, and among the spring flowers; it is sadly true, that many lose gradually their sense of the sacredness of holy time, and are led by the easy declivity of a downward path into the practice of those gross vices which diversify the miserable career of the confirmed Sabbath breaker.

*On the other hand, we must not forget more grateful differences between the position of the population here, and in their early homes.* For those who desire them, our religious privileges are in some respects superior to those of their country birthplace. Many are often the weary steps over hill and through vale, by which the distant church, there, is to be reached. The weekly assembly for conference and prayer, is limited to the few whose contiguous residence permits their presence. Especially in the time of storm and during the severity of winter, are they interrupted in their attendance on the means of grace.

Here, on the contrary, the word of God is brought so near, that people can hardly help hearing it. The Sabbath school, the prayer meeting, the lecture room, and the church, beckon them into their open doors. Though

---

\* Including the Franklin Street Church, which seats eleven hundred besides the choir.



if all should come, all could not be accommodated, still all who *do* come are provided for, and easily, and with joy they “draw water out of the wells of salvation.”

There are here furnished also, in libraries, and evening teachers, and circles for social improvement, facilities for the profitable employment of leisure hours, which are more available than were possible in a thinly settled town.

Let us now review the ground gone over. We have found in the uprising of manufacturing cities a new element somewhat peculiar to the present type of social progress. We have seen that each may be considered an immense seminary, whence, after an average training of from four and a half to nine years, the pupils return to their birthright, and there, mostly, resume their position as permanent citizens,—and that in all probability the next ten years may send out some two hundred thousand graduates.

We have, to some extent, designated the mental and moral influences under which they are trained. We have remarked, that they will be likely to acquire a strong habit of mental excitement, and a mass of certain kinds of knowledge which they would not else have learned, and much, too, which they ought never to know. We have seen that the tendency of their residence will be to make them more profuse in pecuniary expenditure, and lavish in outward adornings; more subject to the allurements of dissipating amusement; more exposed to the artifices of the gambler and the libertine; more open to the dangerous persuasives of theological error; that they will be less guarded by parental counsel and the “public opinion” of friends; and that they will be in great danger of losing their respect for the sacredness of the Sabbath. On the other hand, we have found that their religious privileges, if rightly used, and many of their social and intellectual advantages, are far greater than they might elsewhere be.

What now—as philosophers and philanthropists, as

*Christians*, let us ask—what now shall be the influence of all this upon the community? What kinds of citizens will these “graduates” become? How shall they be felt, going forth thus in imposing numbers through the land?

That they will have influence of some sort, we may rest assured. They are not the men, nor the women, to sit quietly down, and thenceforth be ciphers on the left hand of the community. As they turn their footsteps homeward, they carry with them the fervid mental activity, the knowledge of men and things, and more or less of books, and the habits of dissipation or of industry, which they have here acquired. Having learned to speak as well as think, to argue as well as read, all that they do will be likely somewhat largely to affect those in their immediate circle.

Suppose a case in illustration. Let a young man of ingenious mind and fair attainments become tainted, while here, with the notions of the Atheist. Let him master the whole catalogue of frivolous and dishonest objections against the Bible, put forth by men mostly of so little sense, or so much prejudice, as not to know when they are refuted; and then let him return to some one of our quiet towns, for his permanent residence. He is intelligent, and he has here learned by contact with the world, some of the outward graces which go to fashion an engaging exterior. He is familiar with the ordinary topics of discourse, and in his new, or rather his old, home, he is, on the whole, an attractive man; one whom the young men like, whose company they seek, whose notions they retail at second hand, in the belief that he is the oracle of the most liberal and the politest progress. Now it is plain, that his crafty insinuations against superstition and priestcraft, his loose opinions about the restraints of the decalogue, and gradually, his bold denial of the truth of revealed religion, and the existence of a God; falling in, as they would, with the depraved inclinations of the unregenerate heart, cannot but be dangerous. The contagion will spread from him. “One



*sinner* destroyeth *much* good," and I shall not travel out of the spirit of Inspiration, when I add, *one infidel destroyeth more*.

Look for one moment at what we must admit to be the tremendous *possibility*. Let loose upon our dear New England, in twenty years, four or five hundred thousand men and women, trained during the most important five years of their lives under evil auspices—many of them infidels, more, Sabbath-breakers, still more of them thoroughly educated into habits of thoughtlessness and dissipation—all to settle down as citizens, and many, by their information and mental activity, to become influential; to have a voice in our town meetings, and our halls of legislation; to modify the religious character of hundreds of our parishes, and, worst of all, to send out into the world, in due time, their own sentiments and deeds, reduplicated in their children.

It is far from being my design to endeavor to raise a panic; least of all, to excite a prejudice in the mind of any man against sending his son or his daughter to become a resident in a manufacturing city. But I do wish—standing, as in the providence of God I do, where I have been led especially to study the influences and tendencies of our manner of life—I *do wish* to excite your interest in that strangely so long forgotten thing; the reflex influence upon the land, of these rattling looms and whirling spindles. I have named to you, what we might call, the branches studied in these great seminaries. I have deduced therefrom (you can judge with how much of a logical sequence) the probabilities of the case. And I solemnly affirm, that in my belief, these our young inhabitants, borrowed, for the most susceptible season of their lives, from the hills, are in danger—in great moral danger—*on one condition*, and that is, IF YOU LET THEM ALONE!

Some counteracting energy must be brought to bear upon them, or they are not safe, neither in due time, will our country be safe. This new phase of social

life demands either a new moral remedy, or new skill and zeal in the application of the old.

III. *I come then, in the third place, to the inquiry, what are the new moral and religious demands created by this newly uprisen form of social existence?* If this place, with its kindred cities and villages, is to be the source of an immense outflowing of social influence, reason says, touch it in its source. If there is danger that the streams gushing out here, will carry barrenness and death, instead of joy and gladness, let us do as Elisha did, when the men of Jericho complained of the sterile and fatal results of the streams that flowed there: "And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein, and they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the *spring of the waters*, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence, any more death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day according to the saying of Elisha, which he spake."

The "salt" of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God is that which must heal our waters of influence; for to this very end was it ordained. Comforting is that surety of the divine decree, that every condition of social existence pregnant with high results of life and death, was from the beginning, fully known to God, and that, in the Gospel of his Son and the Church of his love, a remedy, appropriate and effectual, was skillfully provided. What we have to do is, not to waste our time, and exhaust our energies in devising some brave vessel of moonshine, with cordage of sand, in which the race may sail out of all trouble into all blessedness, but with faith and prayer to make the right adjustment of those remedies, which in His counsels were prepared for all human ills "before the foundation of the world."

Chiefest of these, around which cluster all others, like branches around the upholding and life-giving trunk, is the *pulpit*. "For after that the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of



preaching to save them that believe." The Christian poet uttered but the simplest truth when he penned that glowing eulogy :

" The Pulpit—in the sober use  
Of its legitimate, peculiar powers  
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,  
The most important and effectual guard,  
Support, and ornament of Virtue's cause.  
There stands the messenger of truth : there stands  
The legate of the skies ! His theme divine,  
His office sacred, his credentials clear.  
By him the violated Law speaks out  
Its thunders ; and by him, in strains as sweet  
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace."

Various remedies for human ills, I know have been devised, (in France and elsewhere,) to supersede the pulpit ; but having been fairly tried, they have fairly failed. Being " of the earth, earthy," they are impotent when compared with God's device. That alone has power enough to pierce to the quick a sin-hardened heart.

The world is full of men who have given loose to their animal passions, till they have injured their health of mind and conscience, if not of body, and nearly or quite ruined their happiness. How shall they be raised up ? Will you work upon their pride as men, and tell them what a Godlike thing is the human soul, and how noble they might become with a little repentance ? Your words will be to them, doubtless, " as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument," with that further fact, " they will hear them, but do them not." Will you bribe them to be virtuous ? They will remain so till they can expend your bribe in new indulgence. There is no external hold in all their slippery character where you can grasp them firmly from without. The only possible alternative is, to grasp them within, to aim at the conscience, to speak of God, and heaven, and hell. This may not do the work ; but nothing else can do it.

In this work the spoken word is needful ; the voice of the living teacher. "God," says one writer,\* "has so formed the voice of the minister, and the ear of the people, that the philosophical consequence is 'faith cometh by hearing,' if the Spirit be present with his aid. He has so made the hand and the face of the speaker, and the eye and heart of the hearer, that the sacred office seems to have its foundation laid in the very constitution of the body and soul, and like the Sabbath, to have what is technically called a moral, as well as positive groundwork." Everywhere too does experience, in harmony with inspiration, assert that the *preaching* of the gospel is the great instrumentality for the salvation of the mind as well as the heart—of the body equally with the soul.

And in no place is this more true than in the atmosphere of manufactures. There is here a readier sympathy with the public speaker. Activity of mind makes good hearers. Because a people read and think, and argue during six week-days at home, they are thereby more accessible to the preacher's voice on the seventh. They are physically of easy access. The church door is near to their own, and they are less detained at home by storm and cold. Hence it is comparatively easy here to gather an assemblage, and when gathered, to win their attention.

The lawyer and the political orator have an advantage before our audiences. They find no better ones. But the preacher has, in one respect, the advantage of them, for what he speaks carries along with it an in-born power. There is nothing like what the result of his labor might be, and sometimes is, in the proudest records of secular eloquence. He wields the truth of God, while that truth comes clothed in the omnipotence of its Author. "Its onset upon the mind,"† it has

\* Prof. Park's Introduction to "The Preacher and Pastor," p. 38.

† Rev. L. Swain's Sermon at the Dedication of the Third Congregational Church in Nashua, N. H., Nov. 21, 1847.



been beautifully said, "is more than human. It comes from afar, travelling in the greatness of its strength out of the depths and the immensities of Eternal Love. It comes not upon man, like other agencies, from his own level; it descends from on high, and it rushes down the slope of heaven upon him, with all the momentum of the 'world to come.' There is not an avenue to the heart which it does not enter, not a motive which it cannot ply to the uttermost, not a moral susceptibility in which it cannot effect a lodgment for the whole artillery of its spiritual power. 'It is the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation.' " The Spirit of the Most High is in his sanctuary, and the words of the humblest, sincere and pious, preacher have the promise of being made the vehicle of its soul-saving energy. By the medium of his prayers and expostulations it is, that God is pleased to make His temple the "gate of Heaven," to worshipping multitudes.

It is true also that the pulpit is the heart of the whole body of Christian operations. Week-day schools and Sabbath schools, temperance societies and benevolent associations, all have a work to do in the evangelization of men. But they are the extremities, which cease their vitality and become dead and cumbersome, when the heart ceases its pulsations. With the pulpit to direct and infuse energy, they go on prosperous in their work, but without it they can seldom long exist. If they do not die outright, but remain to the eye sweet and fair, we shall find on a closer view they are

*" So coldly sweet—so deadly fair,  
We start—for soul is wanting there !"*

Here about the pulpit, then, cluster the surest, noblest instruments of human blessing. When you can get a man, young, giddy, skeptical though he be, to cross over the outer circumference of its influence, and approach toward its glowing centre, there is hope in

his case. The cross of Christ is that centre, and there is a power in bleeding love. The messages of salvation there spend their force. All the human elements of eternal life are there. And there too descends that supernatural Power, without whose precious energy, preaching and praying are alike unavailing. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

This in its purest, clearest, strongest influence is what we want—what we *must have*. It can save these thousands, which nothing else has power enough, without its help, to do. You may frown at my earnestness. You may smile, because I seem to magnify mine office; but I tell you these are true words. Common sense is with me. The Bible is with me. History is with me. That most stubborn argument of *fact* is with me.

In answer to our question, then, I take the position, that the great thing rendered necessary by this new existence of manufacturing towns and cities, is to sustain the church of Christ, in all her influences vigorously there. These cities must be evangelized or they are gone. They must be evangelized by the presence and the power of the pulpit, with its appropriate aids. Churches must be built, and preachers sustained, in number sufficient, by God's blessing, to have a controlling influence upon the great mass of the people. And then the churches, thus founded and nurtured, must remember their high destiny and their great responsibilities. For it will be theirs, under God, to say whether this great living tide setting in upon them shall be brought under virtuous and pious influence, and whether it shall flow forth in due time to be a blessing or a curse.

Think of it! What an opportunity of good God is granting to these churches! He brings young men



and women from their distant homes, and places them for a few months or years here, where we can work upon them; where, though many things oppose, many things also conspire to help us. In a sense, he makes us responsible for them. And as much of harm as they must do, if they go away degraded and polluted, the emissaries of Satan; so much of good they may accomplish, if they depart with Christ's love in their hearts, to be his missionaries through the land.

The Christian world long since became awake to the important influence of our colleges and schools of learning. Through our whole country, the followers of Jesus meet annually at the mercy-seat, especially to supplicate the blessings of salvation upon the youth congregated there. When! Oh, when! shall they awake to the comparative importance of these other seminaries, training their pupils in a very different moral atmosphere, and graduating yearly, probably, more than ten times as many!

If, like David of old, we would serve well as "under-rowers"\* in the bark of our generation, before we fall asleep; let us toil and pray, and pray and toil, here at this fountain of power. If we are idle at our post, by and by these multitudes will be far beyond our reach, and spreading through the land we love a stream of desolation and moral death, which the unhealed waters of Jericho could but all too faintly typify.

---

BRETHREN, if the train of reflection through which I have led you should have seemed in any degree alien to the peculiar associations of this delightful hour, let me find an apology in the suggestion that our subject has but developed the reason for the work we now consummate. By the grace of God, we bring, on this evening of hallowed memories, our "*new cruse*," that

---

\* Acts 13, 36: Δαυίδ μὲν γὰρ ἰδίᾳ γενεᾷ ὑπηρετήσας, etc.

now and henceforth the "salt" of the gospel of grace may be cast therein and therefrom, for the healing of these outflowing waters.

Yes, dear brethren, our work is done! Our prayers, to-night find answer! Our pilgrimage through the desert of unconsecrated halls is over. We hope no more to be compelled to worship, with pain outweighing pleasure, at altars where strange and unhallowed fires mingled with our sacrifice. Long and severe has been the toil. Grievous was the burden to be borne, yet the willing shoulder has not been withdrawn. Patience and faith have triumphed, and our temple stands in beauty, "our humble offering, made with hands." For three years and six months, homeless and desolate, let us thank God for what we to-night behold.

To Him now, and henceforth, be PRAISE. Praise, for the harmony that has sweetened our counsels; praise, for the self-denial which from that fountain, never dry and never flowing full, the poor Christian's purse, has brought forth the silver and the gold; praise, that kind hearts have warmed in our behalf, and helped us; praise, that no accident has marred our work; praise, for that wonderful Providence which has thus far, in our more than forty months of union, spared us the sorrow of committing to the grave the first one of the adult male members of our congregation; praise, that another Christian temple is erected; praise, for the good works which, with the eye of faith we see shall be done here, in our time, and in succeeding generations.

We have built this temple, not for ourselves alone, nor for our children, nor for our children's children. They shall share its holy teachings with multitudes who shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and sit down here for a season by their side. Beautiful is the village church, built on the sacred spot "where the forefathers of the hamlet sleep,"—where, in the same seats, from year to year sit the same well known forms. Beautiful is the



pastor's privilege from year to year, to minister to the same well loved hearts ; to miss them as, one by one, they depart for that better land which he has taught them how to seek, and to be missed by them when the hour of his own departure comes.

But this is not the beauty of our lot. We are compelled to stand, as it were, on the river's bank, and see the waters ever flowing by. Our worshippers in one long procession, pass through our aisles and go, to come not again. We cannot forget how many whom we have dearly loved, are to-night gone to other and distant fields. When our hearts were just knit together, and we had learned to lean upon them, the current swept them away out of our sight. Yet have we this comfort. If we can color the waters, they will color the sea. As the machinery stamps our own prints, so we may stamp the character which, as it passes, dwells for a season under our pressure. And as that fabric is found giving warmth and thrift and comeliness in a thousand dwellings, so may the results of our impress be full of comfort and blessing to great multitudes in far places, whom we shall never see, "till the heavens be no more."

"Now therefore arise, O Lord God into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength : let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness." Make this our house the residence of thy regenerating and sanctifying Spirit. Here save us and our children ; and may the thousands who shall flow in hither in future time, go hence, with new hearts and right spirits. So shall it be well that these walls have been builded. We bring thee not a temple gorgeous with the golden splendor of that of Jerusalem ; but, plain and simple though it be, thou wilt not despise our offering. It shall stand long after we are gone. Before its corner stone shall crumble, it shall witness those great triumphs by which thou wilt gather in many sons and daughters to salvation. And when its solid structure, bending under the weight

of years, shall at length be dust again, then, may many souls here builded in righteousness, in heaven testify that our labor has not been "in vain in the Lord," and a land saved from the curse of overflowing barrenness, "rejoice and blossom as the rose!"